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The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Security Council
Sixty-first year

Identical letters dated 25 December 2006 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I write to inform you of the highly disturbing number of Qassam rockets launched by Palestinian terrorists in the Gaza Strip since the ceasefire went into effect last month. These persisting Palestinian terror attacks not only violate the agreed upon ceasefire, but also place the entire region in alarming and growing danger.

Since the morning of Sunday, 26 November 2006, when the ceasefire agreed upon by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in the Gaza Strip commenced, until yesterday, Monday, 25 December 2006, 53 Qassam rockets have been fired by Palestinian terrorists at Israel. In the past few weeks alone, 24 rockets were fired, 10 of which landed in Israel. Over the last few weeks, many more Qassam rockets landed in Israel, particularly in the southern town of Sderot, causing injury and trauma to civilians and extensive damage to infrastructure and private property. The barrage of falling rockets gravely disrupts daily life in Sderot and other area communities.

The continuation of Palestinian terror is an outright act of provocation, threatening the viability of sustainable peace and security in our region. The Palestinians must adhere to the agreed upon principles of the ceasefire, and spare no effort to put an end to the violence and terror against Israel.

No country in the world would stand idly by as its citizens were viciously attacked by unceasing terrorism. Israel has exercised tremendous self-restraint in its response to these violations of the ceasefire and assaults on its sovereignty, people, and territory. But Israel has the right to defend itself and its people, as cited in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, and will be compelled to do so if the rocket attacks do not stop.

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This message must be clearly conveyed to the Palestinian leadership in order to prevent further deterioration of the situation.

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 13 and 14, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dan **Gillerman**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative